

Message Text

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SUBJECT: BRITISH COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

1. B.C. FINANCE MINISTER WOLFE ANNOUNCED JUNE 16 A REVISION OF GOVERNMENT PURCHASING POLICY TO GIVE AN ADDED EDGE TO B.C. GOODS AND SERVICES. NEWS ACCOUNTS STATED THAT B.C. PRODUCTS ARE ALREADY FAVORED OVER OUT-OF-PROVINCE MATERIALS BY A 5 PERCENT DIFFERENTIAL WHICH WILL NOW BE RAISED TO 10 PERCENT AND THAT GOODS FROM ELSEWHERE IN CANADA WILL BE FAVORED OVER IMPORTS BY A 5 PERCENT PREFERENCE WHEN UNAVAILABLE IN B.C. WOLFE STATED "WE ARE RE-EMPHASIZING OUR PRESENT POLICY THAT B.C. MANUFACTURERS BE GIVEN FIRST CONSIDERATION IN ALL PUBLIC PURCHASES, PROVIDING THAT SUITABILITY TO THE END USER AND DELIVERY TERMS ARE SATISFACTORY"

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2. ACCORING TO THE PRESS REPORT, THE NEW POLICY WILL APPLY TO ALL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, CROWN CORPORATIONS AND CONTRACTORS TO WHOM PUBLIC PURCHASING AUTHORITY HAS BEEN DELEGATED. WOLFE ALSO SAID MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO ADOPT THE PRACTICE OF SHOWING A PREFERENCE FOR B.C. GOODS.

3. WOLFE INDICATED THAT B.C. GOVERNMENT PRESENTLY SPENDS DOLS 140 TO DOLS 150 MILLION PER YEAR IN PURCHASES AND THAT ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF THE PRODUCTS BOUGHT ARE FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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RM COMMENT: ACCORDING TO INFORMATION FROM FINANCE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, THE PREFERENCE DIFFERENTIALS WILL BE CALCULATED ON THE BASIS OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA AND/OR CANADA VALUE ADDED AND THUS THE OVERALL IMPACT WILL BE LESS THAN MIGHT OTHERWISE BE EXPECTED. CALCULATIONS ON THIS BASIS, FURTHERMORE, MAY BECOME EXCEEDINGLY COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT TO ADMINISTER. THERE IS ALSO SOME QUESTION TO WHAT EXTENT QUASI-INDEPENDENT CROWN CORPORATIONS MAY

COOPERATE IN VIEW OF THEIR INTERESTS IN KEEPING COSTS DOWN.

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